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ABSTRACT

Following adoption of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in 1998, new prekindergarten curriculum guidelines were developed. These voluntary guidelines articulate what 3- and 4-year-olds should know and be able to do and provide a means to align prekindergarten programs with the TEKS curriculum. The guidelines are intended to assist educators in making decisions about curriculum content and in defining and implementing a comprehensive curriculum that will provide opportunities for young children to achieve knowledge and skills. Specific goals are delineated for prekindergarten children in the following content areas: (1) language and early literacy (including listening comprehension, speech production and speech discrimination, vocabulary, verbal expression, phonological awareness, print and book awareness, and motivation to read); (2) mathematics (including number and operations, patterns, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, and classification and data collection); (3) science (science processes and concepts); (4) social studies (including history, culture, community, geography, and economics); (5) fine arts (art, music, and dramatic play); (6) health and safety; (7) personal and social development; (8) physical development (including physical movement, gross motor development, and fine motor development); and (9) technology applications. The document concludes with acknowledgments for those involved in the development of the guidelines. (KB)

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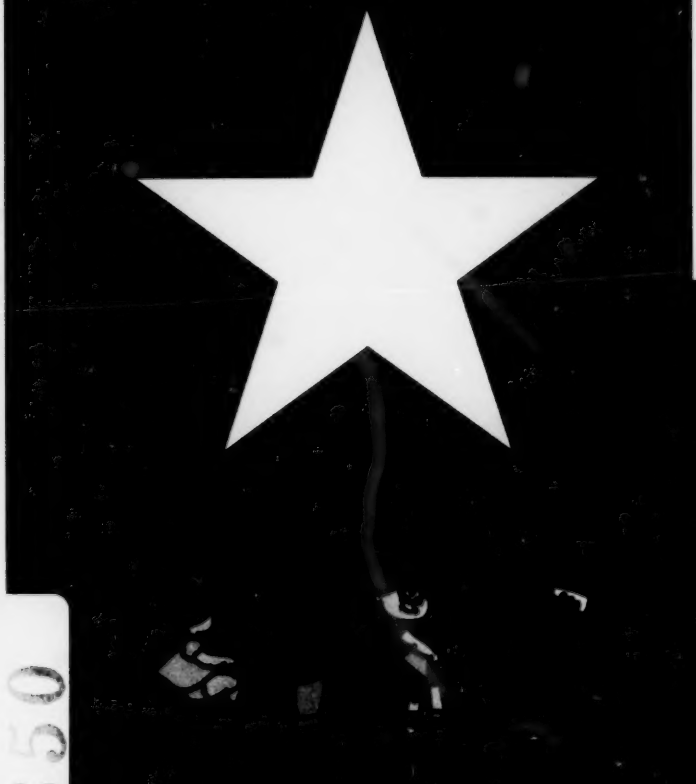

Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines

Texas Education Agency

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Jim Nelson
Commissioner of Education

December 10, 1999

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

With the adoption of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in 1998, the essential elements of curriculum for the prekindergarten program were repealed. Under the direction of former Commissioner Mike Moses, a working group of educators and community members from across the state convened to draft guidelines for a prekindergarten curriculum that school districts could use on a voluntary basis. Development of the guidelines drew upon expertise from Texas educators, nationally recognized individuals, professional organizations, and university personnel. Draft guidelines were presented to focus groups across the state for input and revision.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines. These guidelines articulate what three- and four-year-old students should know and be able to do in the foundation and enrichment areas. These guidelines provide a means to align prekindergarten programs with the TEKS curriculum. Use of these guidelines by school districts is voluntary. The guidelines are intended to help educators make informed decisions about curriculum content for prekindergarten children and define and implement a comprehensive curriculum that will provide many opportunities for our youngest students to achieve knowledge and skills.

Please contact the Division of Curriculum and Professional Development at (512) 463-9581 if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Nelson
Commissioner of Education

Enclosure

Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines

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PREKINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Research confirms the value of early education for young children. Prekindergarten programs that support effective teaching practices have been shown to lead to important growth in children's intellectual and social development, which is critical to their future academic success. Quality programs that provide challenging but achievable curriculum engage children in thinking, reasoning, and communicating with others. With teacher direction and guidance, children respond to the challenge and acquire important skills and concepts.

The purpose of this document is to help educators make informed decisions about curriculum content for prekindergarten children. The guidelines are based on knowledge of theory and research about how children develop and learn; they reflect the growing consensus among early childhood professional organizations that a greater emphasis be placed on young children's conceptual learning, acquisition of basic skills, and participation in meaningful and relevant learning experiences. The guidelines also delineate the content that children are to learn and what they should be able to achieve. Finally, the guidelines provide a means to align the prekindergarten programs with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

The guidelines describe specific goals for prekindergarten children in each content area. The intent of this organizational design is to ensure that all three- and four-year-old children have the opportunity to strive towards these goals. Due to age differences and previous experiences, however, children will have a great diversity of knowledge. Some children, regardless of their age level, will be at the beginning of the learning continuum, while others will be further along. Children with disabilities may need accommodations and modifications of the guidelines in order to benefit from them. For children whose first language is not English, the student's native language serves as a foundation for knowledge acquisition. Students in a prekindergarten English as a Second Language (ESL) program should receive instruction in a manner they can understand and that is commensurate with their proficiency level in English. Children's current strengths and skills should serve as the starting point for new experiences and instruction rather than become a limitation. To use these guidelines to the best advantage and to extend the learning of skills and concepts, teachers must build on children's existing competencies.

These guidelines are important tools to help teachers define and implement a comprehensive curriculum. Such a curriculum helps to build connections between subject matter disciplines by organizing the large amounts of information children must learn into a set of meaningful concepts. Using concepts from the guidelines, teachers can work across disciplines to provide many opportunities for children to achieve knowledge and skills.

This document presents the commissioner's guidelines for prekindergarten curriculum. Because there is no state-required prekindergarten curriculum, use of these guidelines is voluntary. Texas Education Code § 29.153 contains statutory requirements concerning prekindergarten.

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Language and Early Literacy

During the prekindergarten years, children's experiences with communication and literacy begin to form the basis for their later school success. Given adequate opportunities to interact with responsive adults and peers in language and print-rich environments, young children develop vocabulary, extended language skills, and knowledge of the world around them. They develop listening comprehension and phonological awareness; understanding of the everyday functions of print; motivation to read; appreciation for literary forms; and print awareness and letter knowledge. They learn what books are and how to use them. Understanding the value of literacy as a means of communication, as well as coming to enjoy reading, are accomplishments typical of the future good reader. These language and literacy accomplishments are best achieved through activities that are integrated across different developmental areas: cognitive development, fine and gross motor development, and social and emotional development. It is important to consider native language, augmentative communication, and sensory impairments in accomplishing these guidelines.

Prekindergarten educators should provide opportunities to promote language and literacy learning in children who speak a language other than English. Except where specified, the following guidelines outline language and literacy accomplishments for three- and four-year-old children in their native language. For students whose first language is other than English, the native language serves as the foundation for English language acquisition. Specific guidelines for the language and literacy development of prekindergarten children whose home language is not English in English-only settings appear below in each domain.

Language and Early Literacy Development

(1) Listening Comprehension

Prekindergarten-aged children are able to comprehend what they hear in conversations and in stories read aloud with increasing accuracy, though three-year-old children may respond in single words or brief phrases to some questions, especially "why," "how," and "when" questions. Children demonstrate understanding through their questions, comments, and actions. Prekindergarten children in English as Second Language (ESL) settings listen purposefully to English-speaking teachers and peers to gather information about their new language.

The child:

- listens with increasing attention
- listens for different purposes (e.g., to learn what happened in a story, to receive instructions, to converse with an adult or a peer)
- understands and follows simple oral directions
- enjoys listening to and responding to books
- listens to and engages in several exchanges of conversations with others
- listens to tapes and records, and shows understanding through gestures, actions, and/or language
- listens purposefully to English-speaking teachers and peers to gather information and shows some understanding of the new language being spoken by others (ESL).

(2) Speech Production and Speech Discrimination

Young children must learn to vocalize, pronounce, and discriminate the sounds and words of language. Although most children in prekindergarten can accurately perceive the difference between similar-sounding words, they continue to acquire new sounds and may mispronounce words quite often in their own speech. The ability to produce certain speech sounds such as /s/ and /r/ improves with age. Just as infants and toddlers develop control over the sounds of their first language, young children in ESL settings gradually learn to pronounce the sounds of the English language.

The child:

- perceives differences between similar sounding words (e.g., "coat" and "goat," "three" and "free," [Spanish] "juego" and "fuego")
- produces speech sounds with increasing ease and accuracy
- experiments with new language sounds
- experiments with and demonstrates growing understanding of the sounds and intonation of the English language (ESL).

(3) Vocabulary

Prekindergarten children experience rapid growth in their understanding of words and word meanings. Vocabulary knowledge reflects children's previous experiences and growing knowledge of the world around them and is one of the most important predictors of later reading achievement. As children learn through experiences, they develop concepts, acquire new words, and increasingly refine their understanding of words they already know.

The child:

- shows a steady increase in listening and speaking vocabulary
- uses new vocabulary in everyday communication
- refines and extends understanding of known words
- attempts to communicate more than current vocabulary will allow, borrowing and extending words to create meaning
- links new learning experiences and vocabulary to what is already known about a topic
- increases listening vocabulary and begins to develop a vocabulary of object names and common phrases in English (ESL).

(4) Verbal Expression

Effective communication requires that children use their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and sense of audience to convey meaning. Three- and four-year-old children become increasingly adept at using language to express their needs and interests, to play and pretend, and to share ideas. Children's use of invented words and the overgeneralization of language rules (for example, saying "foots" instead of "feet" or [Spanish]"yo no cabo" instead of "yo no quepo") is a normal part of language acquisition. Second language learners in English-only prekindergarten settings may communicate nonverbally (e.g., through gestures) before they begin to produce words and phrases in English. The ESL accomplishments noted below represent a developmental sequence for second-language acquisition in young children.

The child:

- uses language for a variety of purposes (e.g., expressing needs and interests)
- uses sentences of increasing length (three or more words) and grammatical complexity in everyday speech
- uses language to express common routines and familiar scripts
- tells a simple personal narrative, focusing on favorite or most memorable parts
- asks questions and makes comments related to the current topic of discussion
- begins to engage in conversation and follows conversational rules (e.g., staying on topic and taking turns)
- begins to retell the sequence of a story
- engages in various forms of nonverbal communication with those who do not speak his/her home language (ESL)
- uses single words and simple phrases to communicate meaning in social situations (ESL)
- attempts to use new vocabulary and grammar in speech (ESL).

(5) Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is an auditory skill that involves an understanding of the sounds of spoken words. It includes recognizing and producing rhymes, dividing words into syllables, and identifying words that have the same beginning, middle, or ending sounds. Phonological awareness represents a crucial step toward understanding that letters or groups of letters can represent phonemes or sounds (i.e., the alphabetic principle). This understanding is highly predictive of success in beginning reading. Some basic proficiency in English may be prerequisite to the development of phonological awareness in English for second-language learners.

The child:

- becomes increasingly sensitive to the sounds of spoken words
- begins to identify rhymes and rhyming sounds in familiar words, participates in rhyming games, and repeats rhyming songs and poems
- begins to attend to the beginning sounds in familiar words by identifying that the pronunciations of several words all begin the same way (e.g., "dog," "dark," and "dusty," [Spanish] "casa," "coche," and "cuna")
- begins to break words into syllables or claps along with each syllable in a phrase
- begins to create and invent words by substituting one sound for another (e.g., bubblegum/gugglebum, [Spanish] calabaza/balacaza).

(6) Print and Book Awareness

Through their daily experiences with reading and writing, prekindergarten children learn basic concepts about print and how it works. They learn that print carries meaning and can be used for different purposes. They begin to differentiate writing from other graphic symbols and recognize some of the common features of print (for example, that writing moves from left to right on a page and is divided into words).

The child:

- understands that reading and writing are ways to obtain information and knowledge, generate and communicate thoughts and ideas, and solve problems
- understands that print carries a message by recognizing labels, signs, and other print forms in the environment
- understands that letters are different from numbers
- understands that illustrations carry meaning but cannot be read
- understands that a book has a title and an author
- begins to understand that print runs from left to right and top to bottom
- begins to understand some basic print conventions (e.g., the concept that letters are grouped to form words and that words are separated by spaces)
- begins to recognize the association between spoken and written words by following the print as it is read aloud
- understands that different text forms are used for different functions (e.g., lists for shopping, recipes for cooking, newspapers for learning about current events, letters and messages for interpersonal communication).

(7) Letter Knowledge and Early Word Recognition

Letter knowledge is an essential component of learning to read and write. Knowing how letters function in writing and how these letters connect to the sounds children hear in words is crucial to children's success in reading. Combined with phonological awareness, letter knowledge is the key to children's understanding of the alphabetic principle. Children will use this sound/letter connection to begin to identify printed words.

The child:

- begins to associate the names of letters with their shapes
- identifies 10 or more printed alphabet letters
- begins to notice beginning letters in familiar words
- begins to make some letter/sound matches
- begins to identify some high-frequency words (age 4).

(8) Motivation to Read

Prekindergarten children benefit from classroom environments that associate reading with pleasure and enjoyment as well as learning and skill development. These early experiences will come to define their assumptions and expectations about becoming literate and influence their motivation to work toward learning to read and write.

The child:

- demonstrates an interest in books and reading through body language and facial expressions
- enjoys listening to and discussing storybooks and information books read aloud
- frequently requests the re-reading of books
- attempts to read and write independently
- shares books and engages in pretend-reading with other children
- enjoys visiting the library.

(9) Developing Knowledge of Literary Forms

Exposure to storybooks and information books helps prekindergarten children become familiar with the language of books and story forms. Children develop concepts of story structure and knowledge about informational text structures, which influences how they understand, interpret, and link what they already know to new information.

The child:

- recognizes favorite books by their cover
- selects books to read based on personal criteria
- understands that books and other print resources (e.g., magazines, computer-based texts) are handled in specific ways

- becomes increasingly familiar with narrative form and its elements by identifying characters and predicting events, plot, and the resolution of a story
- begins to predict what will happen next in a story
- imitates the special language in storybooks and story dialogue, and uses it in retellings and dramatic play [(such as "Once upon a time...")]
- asks questions and makes comments about the information and events from books
- connects information and events in books to real-life experiences
- begins to retell some sequences of events in stories
- shows appreciation of repetitive language patterns.

(10) Written Expression

Prekindergarten-aged children generate hypotheses about how written language works and begin to explore the uses of writing for themselves. They also begin to ask adults to write signs and letters for them. Through these early writing experiences, young children develop initial understandings about the forms, features, and functions of written language. Over time, children's writing attempts more closely approximate conventional writing.

The child:

- attempts to write messages as part of playful activity
- uses known letters and approximations of letters to represent written language (especially meaningful words like his/her name and phrases such as "I love you" or [Spanish] " Te quiero")
- attempts to connect the sounds in a word with its letter forms
- understands that writing is used to communicate ideas and information
- attempts to use a variety of forms of writing (e.g., lists, messages, stories)
- begins to dictate words, phrases, and sentences to an adult recording on paper (e.g., "letter writing," "storywriting").

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Mathematics

Mathematics learning builds on children's curiosity and enthusiasm, and challenges children to explore ideas about patterns and relationships, order and predictability, and logic and meaning. Consequently, quality instruction occurs in environments that are rich in language, encourage children's thinking, and nurture children's explorations and ideas. These ideas include the concepts of number pattern, measurement, shape, space, and classification.

(1) Number and Operations

Understanding the concept of number is fundamental to mathematics. Children come to school with rich and varied informal knowledge of number. A major goal is to build on this informal base toward more thorough understanding and skills. Children move from beginning to develop basic counting techniques in prekindergarten to later understanding number size, relationships, and operations.

The child:

- arranges sets of concrete objects in one-to-one correspondence
- counts by ones to 10 or higher
- counts concrete objects to five or higher
- begins to compare the numbers of concrete objects using language (e.g., "same" or "equal," "one more," "more than," or "less than")
- begins to name "how many" are in a group of up to three (or more) objects without counting (e.g., recognizing two or three crayons in a box)
- recognizes and describes the concept of zero (meaning there are none)
- begins to demonstrate part of and whole with real objects (e.g., an orange)
- begins to identify first and last in a series
- combines, separates, and names "how many" concrete objects.

(2) Patterns

Recognizing patterns and relationships among objects is an important component in children's intellectual development. Children learn to organize their world by recognizing patterns and gradually begin to use patterns as a strategy for problem-solving, forming generalizations, and developing the concepts of number, operation, shape, and space. Pattern recognition is the first step in the development of algebraic thinking.

The child:

- imitates pattern sounds and physical movements (e.g., clap, stomp, clap, stomp,...)
- recognizes and reproduces simple patterns of concrete objects (e.g., a string of beads that are yellow, blue, blue, yellow, blue, blue)
- begins to recognize patterns in their environment (e.g., day follows night, repeated phrases in storybooks, patterns in carpeting or clothing)
- begins to predict what comes next when patterns are extended.

(3) Geometry and Spatial Sense

Geometry helps children systematically represent and describe their world. Children learn to name and recognize the properties of various shapes and figures, to use words that indicate direction, and to use spatial reasoning to analyze and solve problems.

The child:

- begins to recognize, describe, and name shapes (e.g., circles, triangles, rectangles—including squares)
- begins to use words that indicate where things are in space (e.g., "beside," "inside," "behind," "above," "below")
- begins to recognize when a shape's position or orientation has changed
- begins to investigate and predict the results of putting together two or more shapes
- puts together puzzles of increasing complexity.

(4) Measurement

Measurement is one of the most widely used applications of mathematics. Early learning experiences with measurement should focus on direct comparisons of objects. Children make decisions about size by looking, touching, and comparing objects directly while building language to express the size relationships.

The child:

- covers an area with shapes (e.g., tiles)
- fills a shape with solids or liquids (e.g., ice cubes, water)
- begins to make size comparisons between objects (e.g., taller than, smaller than)
- begins to use tools to imitate measuring
- begins to categorize time intervals and uses language associated with time in everyday situations (e.g., "in the morning," "after snack")
- begins to order two or three objects by size (seriation) (e.g., largest to smallest) (age 4).

(5) Classification and Data Collection

Children use sorting to organize their world. As children recognize similarities and differences, they begin to recognize patterns that lead them to form generalizations. As they begin to use language to describe similarities and differences, they begin sharing their ideas and their mathematical thinking. Children can be actively involved in collecting, sorting, organizing, and communicating information.

The child:

- matches objects that are alike
- describes similarities and differences between objects
- sorts objects into groups by an attribute and begins to explain how the grouping was done
- participates in creating and using real and pictorial graphs.

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Science

Young children are natural scientists. They are eager to discover all they can about the world in which they live. In prekindergarten, children participate in simple investigations that help them begin to develop the skills of asking questions, gathering information, communicating findings, and making informed decisions. Using their own senses and common tools, such as a hand lens, students make observations and collect information. Through these processes, prekindergarten children learn about their world.

Children enter the prekindergarten classroom with many conceptions about the natural and constructed world-ideas that they have gained from prior experiences. Meaningful science learning experiences help children investigate those pre-existing ideas while building a foundation for additional knowledge. These meaningful experiences increase children's understanding of the natural world, living things, cycles, change, and patterns—concepts that organize the learning of science.

(1) Science Processes

Children use the processes of science to develop an understanding about their world. They use their senses to gather information, make tentative statements about events and relationships, and begin to test observations, draw conclusions, and form generalizations. Children learn by participating in a simple investigation (for example, adding water to a dried-up sponge), and then thinking about it, and finally discussing what happened. This inquiry approach enables students to build understanding over time.

The child:

- begins to demonstrate safe practices and appropriate use of materials
- asks questions about objects, events, and organisms
- shows an interest in investigating unfamiliar objects, organisms, and phenomena
- uses one or more senses to observe and learn about objects, events, and organisms
- describes observations
- begins to perform simple investigations
- gathers information using simple tools such as a magnifying lens and an eyedropper
- explores by manipulating materials with simple equipment, (e.g., pouring from a cup, and using a spoon to pick up sand or water)
- uses simple measuring devices to learn about objects and organisms
- compares objects and organisms and identifies similarities and differences
- sorts objects and organisms into groups and begins to describe how groups were organized
- begins to offer explanations, using his or her own words
- predicts what will happen next based on previous experience

- solves simple design problems (e.g., making a box into a little house for a storybook character, toy, or pet)
- participates in creating and using simple data charts
- shares observations and findings with others through pictures, discussions, or dramatizations.

(2) Science Concepts

As prekindergarten children learn science skills, they develop concepts about the natural and constructed environment. They identify components of the natural world including rocks, soil, and water. Children observe and describe changes, and they name organisms and describe basic needs of living things. Prekindergarten children observe cycles (for example, wet and dry) and structures (such as fences or buildings) and describe simple patterns that help predict what will happen next. They compare and sort objects and organisms based on observable differences and similarities. The children begin using what they know to solve problems, such as where to hang a wet cloth so it will dry quickly. The prekindergarten children can also develop an awareness that investigations help them learn about the natural world, that certain questions can be answered by investigations, and that those answers can change as new observations are made.

The child:

- observes and describes properties of rocks, soil, and water
- describes properties of objects and characteristics of living things
- begins to observe changes in size, color, position, weather, and sound
- identifies animals and plants as living things
- groups organisms and objects as living or nonliving and begins to identify things people have built
- begins to recognize that living things have similar needs for water, food, and air
- begins to identify what things are made of (e.g., distinguishing a metal spoon from a plastic spoon)
- uses patterns (such as growth and day following night to predict what happens next)
- identifies similarities and differences among objects and organisms
- begins to use scientific words and phrases to describe objects, events, and living things.

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Social Studies

Social studies concentrate on the nature of people and their world, the heritage of the past, and contemporary living and culture. The social studies are both integral to young children's lives and of great interest to them. Driven by a desire to know and achieve mastery over self and their environment, children are eager to gain understanding of the many aspects of their cultural and environmental world. Through social studies, children begin to develop the self-understanding that will serve as a foundation for learning about others and the world around them.

Although all aspects of education have the goal of preparing children to become contributing members of society, social studies are particularly well suited to foster the skills and attitudes necessary for participation in a democracy. Skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and working independently and with others in a classroom prepare children to become fully functioning citizens.

(1) Individual, Culture, and Community

All children live in some type of group or social organization. Prekindergarten children must learn the skills of communicating, sharing, cooperating, and participating with others. These individual skills are necessary for all groups to function successfully and fairly. The better children are able to understand others, the more they will feel a sense of community and connection with other people and with their world.

The child:

- shares ideas and takes turns listening and speaking
- cooperates with others in a joint activity
- identifies and follows classroom rules
- participates in classroom jobs and contributes to the classroom community
- identifies similarities among people like himself/herself and classmates as well as among himself/herself and people from other cultures
- begins to examine a situation from another person's perspective.

(2) History

Prekindergarten children are aware of time and begin to organize their lives around it. Three- and four-year-old children learn to depend on events and routines that occur in a regular and predictable order. They begin to understand past events and how these events relate to present and future activities, demonstrating evidence of their growing understanding of time, change, and continuity.

The child:

- identifies common events and routines (e.g., snack time, storytime)
- begins to categorize time intervals using words (e.g., "today," "tomorrow," "next time")
- recognizes changes in the environment over time (e.g., growth, seasonal changes)
- connects past events to current events (e.g., linking yesterday's activity with what will happen today)
- begins to understand cause-and-effect relationships (e.g., if one goes outside in the rain, one will get wet).

(3) Geography

Geographic thinking for young children begins with the concepts of location and direction. Children use directions to locate their relative position in space and to locate their home and school in their community. They learn to recognize common features in their immediate environment and begin to represent them symbolically through drawings and constructions.

The child:

- identifies common features in the home and school environment (e.g., the library, the playground)
- creates simple representations of home, school, or community through drawings or block constructions
- begins to use words to indicate relative location (e.g., "front," "back," "near," "far")
- identifies common features of the local landscape (e.g., houses, buildings, streets).

(4) Economics

In prekindergarten, children learn about the world of work in their community. They explore the roles and relationships of consumers and producers, and become aware that people produce services as well as goods. Children learn that their community benefits from many different people working in many different ways.

The child:

- understands the basic human needs of all people for food, clothing, and shelter
- understands the roles, responsibilities, and services provided by community workers
- becomes aware of what it means to be a consumer.

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Fine Arts

Young children express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings using a variety of symbols. Through their art, music, and dramatic play, children actively engage in representing what they know and how they think, using problem-solving strategies to express ideas in different forms. The fine arts enhance children's ability to interpret symbols and are associated with growth in all areas of development, including academic learning.

(1) Art

Children explore a wide variety of materials and make discoveries about color, shape, and texture through art experiences. They learn to express what they know and begin to recognize how others express themselves through art. They also begin to gain control of fine-motor muscles and practice hand-eye coordination.

The child:

- uses a variety of materials (e.g., crayons, paint, clay, markers) to create original work
- uses different colors, surface textures, and shapes to create form and meaning
- begins to use art as a form of self-expression
- shares ideas about personal artwork
- begins to show interest in the artwork of others.

(2) Music

Three- and four-year-old children express themselves through singing and movement, and by playing simple instruments. Like art, music is a form of experiencing, learning, and communicating with others. Children learn to experiment with music concepts, volume, tempo, and sound. They begin to appreciate different types of music.

The child:

- participates in classroom music activities
- begins to sing a variety of simple songs
- begins to play classroom instruments
- begins to respond to music of various tempos through movement
- begins to distinguish among the sounds of several common instruments.

(3) Dramatic Play

Creative drama in prekindergarten involves young children in expressive and spontaneous productions. Children demonstrate their unique interpretation to music, songs, and stories through movement and dramatic experiences. These experiences contribute to children's ability to communicate more effectively and engage in cooperative activity with others.

The child:

- expresses feelings through movement
- begins to create or recreate stories, moods, or experiences through dramatic representations
- begins to engage in dramatic play with others.

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Health and Safety

Young children learn health-promoting habits and routines in prekindergarten. In these early years, they develop basic concepts, attitudes, and skills about nutrition, safety, hygiene, and physical activity that contribute to their well being. Children's experiences with their health and discovery of ways to improve it enhance their desire and ability to make wise decisions for healthy living in the future.

(1) Health

Health education includes personal hygiene and nutrition education. Children learn that regular hygiene routines and good nutrition are important to their health.

The child:

- becomes aware of routine healthy behaviors (e.g., brushing teeth)
- begins to follow health-promoting routines (e.g., washing hands)
- begins to understand the need for exercise and rest
- refines use of eating utensils
- begins to recognize and select healthy foods
- prepares simple healthy snacks.

(2) Safety

Prekindergarten children acquire everyday routines and procedures to remain safe and avoid injury. They learn about fire, traffic, environmental and personal safety, and what to do in emergency situations.

The child:

- recognizes the danger of fire and learns to treat fire with caution
- responds appropriately during a fire drill
- knows how to seek help in an emergency
- knows how to cross a street safely
- recognizes the symbol for poison
- knows never to eat substances that are not food
- recognizes the danger of poisonous substances, including drugs
- knows not to talk to, accept rides from, or take treats from strangers
- knows how to get help from a parent and/or trusted adult when made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe by another person/adult
- knows never to take medicine unless it is administered by an adult
- knows about safe behavior around bodies of water (e.g., pools, lakes).

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Personal and Social Development

Prekindergarten children develop personal and social skills that enable them to function well within the social setting of the classroom. Children develop a sense of who they are and their capabilities, and establish positive relationships with others, which enables them to effectively participate in class and community and accomplish meaningful tasks.

(1) Personal Development

Children develop a sense of self in prekindergarten. They begin to show initiative in learning and begin to take greater responsibility for their own behavior. They learn to channel their energies in ways that promote effective learning experiences.

The child:

- develops a sense of personal space
- expresses interests and self-direction in learning
- begins to show self-control by following classroom rules
- begins to be responsible for individual behavior and actions
- begins to show greater ability to control intense feelings (e.g., anger).

(2) Social Development

Children develop interpersonal and social skills for communicating with others. They learn alternatives for resolving conflicts and communicating their needs and feelings verbally, and they begin to develop and maintain productive relationships with other children.

The child:

- begins to share and cooperate with others in group activities
- respects other people's space and personal belongings
- begins to develop friendships with others
- begins to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas through language as well as through gestures and actions
- responds to the suggestions of others.

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Physical Development

Movement is at the center of young children's lives. Prekindergarten children participate in experiences that foster fundamental motor and movement skills, such as walking and running, which are necessary for participation in games and sports throughout life. They begin to develop gross motor skills that involve throwing, catching, and kicking, and fine motor skills that involve greater precision and accuracy of movement.

(1) Physical Movement

Children explore their physical space and understand how their bodies function in space through active movement experiences. They become more skillful and expressive in their movement from one point in space to another through running, jumping, hopping, and skipping movements.

The child:

- explores moving in space
- shows an awareness of name, location, and relationship of body parts
- moves within a space of defined boundaries, changing body configuration to accommodate the space
- becomes more able to move from one space to another in different ways (e.g., running, jumping, hopping, skipping)
- becomes more able to move in place (e.g., axial movements such as reaching, twisting, turning, and bending)
- begins to move in rhythm
- begins to participate in group games involving movement (e.g., Duck, Duck, Goose).

(2) Gross-Motor Development

Gross-motor development requires thought and deliberate movement. Three- and four-year-old children develop greater control of gross-motor manipulative movements that involve giving force to objects and receiving force from objects. Throwing, catching, bouncing, and kicking are fundamental gross-motor manipulative skills.

The child:

- begins to throw or kick an object in a particular direction
- begins to play catch with a bean bag or a large ball
- bounces a large ball and catches it
- begins to coordinate arms and legs (e.g., swinging, stretching).

(3) Fine-Motor Development

Fine-motor manipulative movements involve object-handling activities that emphasize motor control, precision, and accuracy of movement. Using a computer mouse, cutting with scissors, and drawing are the foundational skills needed for the demands of handwriting and other small-motor skills in later school years.

The child:

- begins to develop pincer control in picking up objects (e.g., weaving, touching small objects)
- begins to practice self-help skills (e.g., zipping, buttoning)
- begins to hold writing tools with fingers instead of with a fist
- begins to manipulate play objects that have fine parts
- begins to use scissors.

Prekindergarten Guidelines

Technology Applications

Young children have much to gain from use of technology. In prekindergarten, they expand their ability to acquire information, solve problems, and communicate with others. Regular access and exposure to computers and related technology can enhance this learning. Children use engaging, age-appropriate, and challenging software, and technology to extend their knowledge and to enrich their learning of curriculum content and concepts. These technologies serve as important learning tools and are integrated throughout the instructional program.

Children learn the basic functions of the computer and related technologies. They develop techniques for handling and controlling various input devices, and become increasingly confident and independent users of age-appropriate software programs.

The child:

- starts, uses, and exits software programs
- uses a variety of input devices, such as mouse, keyboard, voice/sound recorder, or touch screen
- begins to use technical terminology, such as "mouse," "keyboard," "printer," "CD-ROM"
- follows basic oral or pictorial cues for operating programs successfully
- enjoys listening to and interacting with storybooks and information texts (e.g., multimedia encyclopedia) in electronic forms
- uses a variety of software packages with audio, video, and graphics to enhance learning experiences (e.g., improving vocabulary, increasing phonological awareness).

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Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a nonsegregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

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If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

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